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AUTHOR Osheka, John R.; Champagne, David W.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors and data that influenced the key implementation decisions of a ninth-grade dropout intervention program in a large urban high school in 1987-1988. The school district was composed of 12 high schools, 15 middle schools, and 48 elementary schools, and served approximately 40,000 students. Data findings are divided by topic headings in the following manner: (1) information needs of the administrator/pilot facilitator and others responsible for making decisions regarding the implementation of an intervention program; (2) changes in the information needs of decision-makers; (3) data collection strategies that were used by decision-makers; (4) key decisions and factors that affected the implementation; and (5) use of data that were generated. Factors, events, and situations that affected the implementation of this pilot program are identified. This study revealed that once the school year began and a modified pilot program was in place, the flow of information from one level of decision-makers to the next rarely took place. The study also suggested that, once the superintendent has made the decision to implement a pilot program, a set of specific questions should be developed to provide a standardized method of collecting data. A sample question design is included. Recommendations on planning and implementation are discussed. Appended are 13 references. (SI)

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Power, Responsibility, Control, and Accountability: A Case Study of Decision Making in an Implementation Effort in a City School District

by

Dr. John R. Osheka and Dr. David W. Champagne

Paper Presented at the Annual A.E.R.A. Conference
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Power, Responsibility, Control, and Accountability: A Case Study of Decision Making in an Implementation Effort in a City School District

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There were three research questions in this study:

1. What decisions were made in moving from a school district priority to full implementation of the pilot year of a project to lower the dropout rate of at risk ninth grade students in a large city high school?
2. Who made the decisions throughout the planning and implementation stages of the project?
3. What data were needed and used by the different decision makers who influenced the project?

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES:

There have been repeated calls for data driven decision making in educational systems (Wallace, 1988; Cooley and Bickel, 1886). These demands, exhortations, rationales and entreaties make good logical sense and if followed should allow clearer, sharper and more accountable program design, implementation and modification. This research was undertaken to determine the degree to which data, either research or evaluation, were used in decision making related to a high priority change effort in an urban school system whose leadership strongly argues for this approach to decision making and program design. We wished not only to determine the extent of

data driven decision making, but what types and amounts of data were required, expected, or used at the various levels of power and responsibility within this school system. To whom were the program implementors actually accountable? What were they accountable for? What data were required to support their judgments?

GENERAL CONTEXT:

In the history of education in the United States, many programs have been implemented in our schools. Some have been successful, but most have failed to survive. Relics of many of the failures can be found in the storerooms and book rooms of schools throughout the country (Hord, Rutherford, Austin, and Hall, 1987). The phenomenon of often hastily planned and hurried implementation of school programs with little formal data based evaluation has been highlighted by current calls for educational reform. Works like A Nation at Risk (1983), A Place Called School (1984), and Horace's Compromise (1984) have described in depressing detail many of the problems found in today's schools.

These problems persist because of the failure of implementation efforts to solve them. The literature which characterizes school organizations as complex, unstructured, shifting combinations of problems, people, and opportunities to make decisions, (Cohen, March, and Olsen, 1972) suggests that this type of organizational structure has often led to an approach of initiating a number of programs in response to problems and waiting to see which one works best. The planning is seldom based on analysis of the problem or on the collection and analysis of information (Patterson, Purkey, and Parker, 1986).

Recent reform efforts, focusing on raising academic standards, have resulted in many new programs. One possible outcome of these efforts may be an increase in the number of high school dropouts. Over one half of the administrators of districts with twenty five thousand or more have reported a serious drop-out problem (Nartriello, McDill, and Aaron, 1985). These researchers contend that raising the standards of time, content, curriculum, and homework are adding to the number of school dropouts. Repeating the historic process described, districts across the country have implemented a number of intervention programs aimed at addressing this problem. We can safely predict that most of these programs will fail and disappear, with little analysis or evaluation of the reasons. The problems will remain. In order for these intervention programs to be successful at reducing the number of dropouts, careful monitoring of both the students and the interventions must be conducted, (Bickle, Bond, and LeMahieu, 1986). This monitoring will provide information to evaluate the program and may facilitate decision making that results in necessary program adaptations.

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors and data that influenced the key implementation decisions of a ninth grade dropout intervention program in a large urban high school. The results of this research can be used to make more informed decisions regarding the implementation or adaptation of new school programs. These informed decisions will be based on sound planning, based on reliable data collected before and during the implementation process itself.

THE PROGRAM BEING STUDIED:

A dropout intervention program was recommended to the Board of Education in an urban school district as one way to meet the specific needs of low achieving ninth grade students. Wehlage, Rutter, and Turnbaugh (1987), reported that high school students who are at risk of becoming dropouts often demonstrate low self-esteem, perceive that they have little control of their future, feel that adults in the school do not care about them, and feel that the discipline code is unfair. The ninth grade intervention program was intended to address these four needs of at risk students in several ways. The use of cooperative learning in the classroom was to be incorporated in the instruction of low achieving ninth grade students. Research suggests that the use of cooperative learning helps to improve the self-esteem of students and encourages them to take control of their future by making them committed to their classes through increased achievement, (Johnson and Johnson, 1974; Slavin, 1977). In addition, this intervention program incorporated a two period a week teacher mentoring/enrichment class. This mentoring/ enrichment time was designed to help students control their behavior, interact with their teachers in a positive manner, and take more active control of their future. The philosophy of Control Theory, (Glasser, 1986), was interwoven into the content of the mentoring class and the processes of these students' academic classrooms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES:

A descriptive case study design was used for this research. It was conducted by a participant observer who was appointed pilot facilitator of the intervention after the program had been designed and the decision to

implement it had been made. He remained the facilitator throughout the year long study. He worked in cooperation with a university professor who assisted in the design of the data collection system for the research. The facilitator kept field notes of significant interactions during the study. He also collected notes of meetings, agendas, reports and materials used in making the original decision about program design, implementation, and evaluation. Each decision maker involved in the program completed written surveys focused on their decision making. The Facilitator also analyzed his own written reports. He also recorded notes of meetings he attended related to these reports. Teachers, students, and building administrators who also influenced the implementation were repeatedly surveyed and interviewed. The Facilitator also used an open ended C-BAM question to record the impressions and concerns of the participants regarding the pilot program. Finally, students' attendance and achievement records from before and after the intervention were summarized and analyzed for district use.

SETTING OF THE STUDY:

The setting for this study was one urban high school in a school district composed of twelve high schools (grades 9-12), fifteen middle schools (grades 6-8), and forty eight elementary schools (grades K-5) serving approximately 40,000 students. The professional staff of the school includes ninety five teachers, one principal, three vice-principals, and four pupil services professionals (guidance counselors). Over ninety percent of the teachers are at the top of the seniority/pay scale and are guaranteed their building position by contractual agreement. Unlike teachers, building administrators are often transferred without warning in periodic district

reassignments. The 1987-1988 school year, the year of this research, began with a complete change in the administrators of this school. The incumbent principal was transferred to a central office position, while his three assistant principals were transferred to other schools in the district. The new administrative team was appointed in July of 1987, a few weeks before school opened for the year. The new principal was a former middle school building principal.

The site for the implementation of the ninth grade intervention program is situated in a predominately white community on the outer border of the city. The community is largely working class families who have a very strong community identity, having lived there for several generations, and have a vested interest in the churches, schools, and businesses located there. These institutions are seen as ways to maintain the status quo of the community and thus provide a future home for their children. A number of the high school staff had attended this school. The building is older but has undergone major renovations over the past twenty years to accommodate for overcrowding. The school is still overcrowded, however, and there is a lack of classroom space to allow for the implementation of new programs which require additional space. Of the students 77% are white and 23% are black. The majority of the black students are bussed into the school from surrounding communities, while the majority of white students walk to school. Due to the perceived ownership of the school by the predominately white student population there has been periodic racial tension there. The school offers a comprehensive secondary program. It also provides special courses for gifted and other special education programs. Approximately thirty percent of the ninth grade students that enter leave the school before

earning a high school diploma. Reported reasons for early exiting from school vary from working to lack of interest in school.

Over the past decade, the city in which this high school is located has had a decrease in its population and the associated tax base to provide for the reforms which are being implemented. There has also been a shift of more mobile white collar workers to the suburbs, and an increase in the minority population of school age children. Since 1981, the school district has made a major commitment to improve the quality of education it provides for its students by implementing a number of innovative educational programs. These programs are in response to periodic needs assessments that are conducted throughout the district. The district has provided support for these initiatives by commitment of its own funds and by aggressively seeking outside funding from federal, state, and private foundation grants. Among these change efforts have been the institution of a district wide staff development program for all professionals of the district, the creation of magnet programs at all school levels, increased responsibility for the instructional teacher leaders of the district, and the active involvement of the teachers in the instructional decision making processes at both the building and district levels. The drop out prevention program studied here is another effort in this long line of innovations.

The high school in this study has a history of interest in helping low achieving students who exhibit "pre-dropout" behaviors. The former principal and a small cadre of teachers had developed and implemented a number of school based intervention programs aimed at helping ninth graders remain in school. The philosophy behind the previous programs was that if the school could help a ninth grader move to the tenth grade, his/her chances

to remain in school greatly increased. Tutoring, "mentoring", and other school programs formed the core of these interventions. It was the former principal and that cadre of teachers who expressed an interest in pilot testing the intervention program of this study. The new principal also expressed an interest in the program and assisted in the implementation of the program studied.

DATA SOURCES:

Data were collected both from school based participants and from others external to the building who in any way influenced decisions about the program. Available district documents related to the program were also collected.

School-based participants included teachers and administrators who played an active role in the actual day to day implementation of the program from the April 1987 through May 1988. These individuals were: the building administrators, the four project teachers, the on site teacher facilitator, and the pupil services department representative. Other significant individuals included in the study that provided a perspective of the decision-making processes at various administrative levels were central office administrators, members of the priority committee who designed the program, and members of the superintendent's cabinet.

The documents reviewed included official district records and recommendations for the adoption of an intervention program; minutes of significant meetings; those documents which established a chronological record of the implementation; and the notes of teachers, the on-site teacher facilitator, and the pilot facilitator.

FINDINGS:

Information needs of the Administrator/Pilot Facilitator and others responsible for making decisions regarding the implementation of an intervention program.

Individuals involved in the decision-making included the Superintendent, the Assistant Executive to the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools, the Director of Staff Development, the Pilot Facilitator, and the building administrators.

The Superintendent reported that he needed to know the answers to three major questions before he could recommend the implementation of the program. His information needs were for the purpose of initiating the implementation process. The three questions that provided him the necessary information were;

1) What were the number of students who were at risk for dropping out of school?
2) What were the reasons for the students' lack of success in school?
3) What were the attitudes of the school staff regarding the success of these students?

According to the Superintendent his endorsement of the pilot program was based on reports of the numbers of students who were at risk for early exiting of school and the reasons for their lack of success in school. He also reported that after his initial recommendation to implement a pilot program to address the needs of these students, he did not request additional information regarding the actual program. Once the initial recommendation

was made, the Superintendent relied on others in the district to implement and monitor the program. Throughout the pilot implementation year there was no indication of formal communication between the Superintendent and other decision makers regarding the status of the program.

The Executive Assistant to the Superintendent requested information regarding the program in the form of three brief interim reports from the Pilot Facilitator. From the data collected for this study, the use or flow of this information is unclear. It is assumed that these reports were sent on to members of the Board of Education as part of program update reports. However, the Pilot Facilitator received no feedback regarding the reactions of Board Members or other district administrators.

The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction reported that although he was not directly responsible for the implementation of this program, he was interested in knowing the numbers of students who were at risk of dropping out of school. In addition, he reported that he wanted to know the reasons for the students' lack of success in school, and the attitudes of the professional staff toward these students.

According to the data collected from the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools was the Board Officer who was directly involved in the process of implementing this program. This responsibility was delegated to this individual since the actual implementation of this program was to take place in one of the District's high schools. This Assistant Superintendent indicated a need to know the following information: Number of students at risk for dropping out of school, reasons for the students' lack of success in school, expectations of the staff for the success of these students, funding

needed for the implementation, the physical space needed for the program, the number of personnel needed to provide the services to the students, and a general overview of the strategies that were to be incorporated. Of these seven areas of identified data needs, only the last dealt with the philosophy and instructional strategies of this pilot program. The majority of data needed by this individual involved the management of the school that was involved.

The District's Director of Staff Development was also initially involved in the implementation of the program. This Director indicated a need to know information associated with the actual implementation of the pilot program. This information included: numbers of students at risk for dropping out of school, reasons for the students' lack of success in school, expectations of the staff for the success of these students, funding needed for the implementation, the physical space needed for the program, the number of personnel needed to provide the services to the students, and a general overview of the instructional strategies that were to be incorporated. Once again only one type of information dealt with the actual instructional aspect of the program.

Once the Pilot Facilitator assumed responsibility for monitoring the actual implementation of the pilot program he indicated that he needed specific information that would affect the implementation process. These information needs included: pilot school data (available space, scheduling constraints, staff expectations, and attitudes), the research associated with cooperative learning and mentoring, the amount of control he had regarding the implementation, the amount of funding available for implementation, and the amount of support that he could expect from the

central office. This administrator indicated a wider range of informational needs. He needed data concerning the management aspects of implementation of the program as well as specific information regarding the instructional strategies that were the basis of the program.

The building administrators reported a need for information that directly affected the running of the school building. These included: number of students involved, number of staff involved, scheduling needs of the program, amount of space needed to implement the pilot program, proposed effect on the incoming ninth grade students, administrators' responsibility for the program, and the resources available to the school that would support the implementation of the program. As in the responses of the other administrators, these data do not show a perceived need by these individuals for specific details regarding the instructional strategies of the program.

Analysis of the data leads to the conclusion that the individuals who were directly responsible for making decisions regarding the implementation of the pilot program had information needs that were very focused and specific to their areas of responsibilities. The data also indicate that those individuals who were closer to the actual implementation site needed specific management information regarding the pilot program and its implementation requirements at the pilot site.

Changes in the Information Needs of Decision Makers.

The Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, and the Director of Staff Development reported that their information needs did not change over the implementation year. However, the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools indicated that as the end of the year

approached, there was a need to know the reaction of all of the participants to the program. This administrator also indicated a need to know the effect that the program had on the students. The reason for this change in information needs was that a determination had to be made in May of 1988 regarding the possible expansion of the program at the secondary level.

The Pilot Facilitator's information needs constantly changed throughout the year due to the various external factors that were influencing the program. New information was needed to make decisions regarding the adaptations in the program, to develop the training program for the staff, and eventually to recommend the continuation of the program. This administrator needed to know: the commitment of the Board toward the program, the support of central office administrators, the commitment of the building staff toward the program, the effect the program had on the students, and the effect the program had on the staff.

The building administrators also indicated that there was a change in their specific information needs. These changes were; the effect of the program on the staff and the students, the possible expansion of the program for the second year, the amount of space and scheduling needs of the program if expanded, and the expectations that the central office had for them if the program expanded.

These responses demonstrate that there were changes in the information needs of those individuals who were most closely involved with the actual implementation of the program and its possible expansion. Each of these changes in information needs was directly related to program changes and adaptations.

Data collection strategies that were used by Decision Makers.

The Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools relied on the Pilot Facilitator for information regarding the program. This was accomplished through periodic informational meetings that were initiated by the Pilot Facilitator. The Director of Staff Development was also a participant in these formal meetings. In addition, copies of the three interim reports that were sent to the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent by the Pilot Facilitator were sent to the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools and the Director of Staff Development.

The building administrators relied upon the staff of the building for information regarding their needs. This was done through verbal communication with the Building Teacher Facilitator. A self designed questionnaire was sent by the principal to the teachers. The administrators also initiated verbal contacts with the teachers and the students, and they received verbal information regarding the pilot program from the Pilot Facilitator. This latter information sharing was initiated by the Pilot Facilitator to keep the building administrators aware of the developments in the program and to collect their impressions of the status of the pilot program.

The Pilot Facilitator also relied upon verbal communications with the various participants in the program. In addition, he made regular observations throughout the year. These included both formal and informal interviews, meetings, and one-to-one discussions with the teaching staff of the program. In addition, he used the instruments that were designed to collect data for the current study as described in the methodology section of this study.

Key Decisions and Factors that Affected the Implementation.

This study identified twenty eight key decisions that were made between Spring of 1985 and April of 1988. Analysis of the twenty eight key decisions that were made regarding the program shows that those made between the Spring of 1985 and April of 1986 involved policy decisions based on a district-wide needs survey. Subsequent decisions to April 1987 were made in the development of the pilot program by a district committee for low achieving students with the final approval of the board. These decisions were all made prior to the appointment of the Pilot Facilitator.

The decisions made from April 1987 to August 1988 were made after the appointment of the Pilot Facilitator. Many of the decisions made during this time period were the result of recommendations made by the Pilot Facilitator based upon his research of the strategies that were to be incorporated in the program. In addition to the decisions made by the Facilitator regarding the program, a decision to make major administrative changes in the pilot setting was made during this time period. This decision marked the beginning of a series of events and situations that greatly influenced the overall outcome of the implementation of the pilot program.

Finally, the decisions made between the period of August of 1987 and April 1988 were ones that involved adaptations in the pilot program as a result of the school's crowded environment and the late identification of students and teachers who were included in the program. These decisions included the final design of the pilot program and the training that took place for the teaching staff. Each of these decisions was based upon data that were passed through the office of the Pilot Facilitator to the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools.

Use of Data that were Generated.

At the district level a needs assessment provided the initial information to the district that resulted in the decision to address the needs of low achieving at risk students. Once the program proposal was submitted to the board for approval, no additional information was generated at this level that directly affected the pilot program.

From the time that the Pilot Facilitator received the assignment to monitor the implementation of the program, he began to request, generate, and use information that greatly influenced the program. This information was generated from two sources. At the central office level, he depended upon the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools and the Director of Staff Development to provide him with information regarding available funding for the program, central office support for the program, and eventually the acceptance of his recommendation for the expansion of the program at the pilot site. This information was used to provide information regarding the program to the building staff members. It was also used by the Facilitator to make decisions regarding the training of the staff and the modifications that were made in the pilot program that were essential for its survival in the school.

The Pilot Facilitator also requested information from the building level personnel who were directly involved in the program. This was done verbally through a series of meetings with both the teachers and the administrators. In addition, the building Teacher Facilitator provided the Pilot Facilitator with an ongoing verbal account of the status of the program. This information was used by the Pilot Facilitator to develop training for the teachers, make the necessary modifications in the program to adapt to the

specific needs of the school during the implementation year, and to make the recommendation to expand the program for the 1988-1989 school year at the site.

The Pilot Facilitator also did his own review of the literature and attended conferences to develop data for decisions about curriculum and instructional strategies and teacher training for the program. With one exception, there existed a two way flow of information between all levels of decision-makers who were involved in the program, and these data passed through the Pilot Facilitator of the program. The one instance in which there was a one way flow of information was from the Pilot Facilitator to the Executive Assistant, and it is assumed, on to the Superintendent. In fact, the data indicate that the Superintendent may not have received ongoing information regarding the program once he made the initial recommendation for implementation of a program to meet the needs of low achieving students at risk for dropping out of school.

CONCLUSIONS:

This case study identified factors, events, and situations which affected the implementation of this pilot program. These included limited communication of information regarding the program, the use of data by individual decision-makers that was specific to their own responsibilities regarding the implementation of the program, the planning of an intervention without the input of the individuals who would eventually be responsible for the program, and the emphasis of the district and school pilot site on their own programmatic needs before focusing on the needs of the pilot program. If the facilitator of a pilot program is not aware of the priorities, practices,

and the factors that influence the implementation then new programs that are supposed to address the specific needs of the district's clients will continue to have their implementation restricted and possibly be made ineffective. This case study exemplifies both of these possibilities. In addition, districts will not be able to fairly judge the effectiveness of these new intervention strategies.

COMMUNICATIONS

This study revealed that once the school year began and a modified pilot program was in place, the flow of information from one level of decision-makers to the next rarely took place. The Pilot Facilitator was the only individual who transmitted information regarding the program from one level of decision-makers to another. The case also revealed that written information regarding the status of the program was only generated by the Pilot Facilitator who sent it to the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent. However, this study was unable to identify the path of this information once it was sent to the Executive Assistant. As reported in the case, the Pilot Facilitator received no feedback regarding the pilot program from administrators above the level of the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools. This example of incomplete communication exemplifies the concept of a loosely coupled system as described in the literature. In this loose coupling, decisions are made in isolation, without the data available in the entire system and with little sharing of the reasons for those decisions.

At the school level, the Pilot Facilitator received information regarding the program from both the teachers and the administrators.

During the the first six weeks of the year, this information was received in the form of verbal reports from both the administrators and the teachers. As the year progressed, the researcher used formal questionnaires and open ended C-BAM instruments to generate additional information regarding the program. Formal interviews and the open ended C-BAM instruments administered to the staff provided the most reliable data regarding their perceptions and attitudes about the program. Informal discussions with the staff usually ended in a series of complaints about the students or the conditions of the school. Although interesting, these discussions were neither reliable nor complete. The researchers therefore recommend that a facilitator of a new program in a school setting structure his/her interactions with the participants through the use of preplanned interviews and or questionnaires. A standardized method of interacting with the staff for information gathering will eliminate information that is not essential for the monitoring of the the program and assure that essential information is gathered. The open-ended C-BAM instrument is an effective means of collecting valuable information. The teachers in this study had the opportunity to reflect on the open ended question as well as to respond in a thoughtful written response. This provided the Pilot Facilitator with the opportunity to note changes in attitude and concerns of individuals regarding the implementation of the program. In addition, this method of collecting clear consistent data is the most cost effective method used in this study.

This study also suggests that once the Superintendent received the specific information that he needed to recommend the implementation of the pilot program that he no longer needed or used additional information. In fact, once he made the decision to implement a pilot program he assigned the

actual planning and implementation of the program to others in the organization. Specifically this charge was given to the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools, the Director of Staff Development, and the Pilot Facilitator. It is assumed that this delegation of authority is necessary in a district this size due to the number of district initiatives that must be undertaken to address the wide variety of needs found in the system. The expectation that one individual would be able to monitor all district initiatives is unreasonable. However, this need to delegate with little subsequent feedback could leave the chief administrator less that adequately informed about new programs in the district. Therefore, in such a system the superintendent needs to implement a consistent and accurate method of collecting key information and data regarding the implementation of new programs. That method must require sharing information with those individuals responsible for making other decisions regarding the programs. That system should also provide him/her with accurate information regarding the status of the program, the effect it is having upon the students, the effect it is having upon the school, and finally the cost effectiveness of the intervention. The Superintendent risks being cut off from vital information if he/she does not establish such a feedback loop. In fact, the very program that he/she has been responsible for initiating may not be maintained due to apparent neglect. The actual implementor of programs needs some regular feedback regarding judgments being made or perception of the program by the chief school officers.

There are a number of recommendations that if implemented would result in a better flow of communication between all levels of decision-makers, as well as provide a systematic means to monitor the

implementation of a new program in a school organization. The first of these is to develop a set of specific questions that are expected to be asked and answered by key decision makers throughout the various phases of a program's implementation. This set of questions is designed to provide a standardized method of collecting data regarding the status of programs, as well as providing those who are directly responsible for designing and implementing the program with the expectations held by central office administrators. These questions provide a focus of communication for the specific decision-makers of the new program.

These questions should be arranged into the following three categories; 1) The design of the program, 2) the implementation phase, and 3) the evaluation of the program. The major questions follow. Others may need to be added in specific settings.

Program Monitoring Questions

Design Stage of Program Planning

1. What are the problems/goals/or priorities you are trying to address through this program?

2. What literature, people, or organizations have you consulted to collect information about what others have tried to meet the same or similar concerns elsewhere?

3. What were the results of prior efforts, and what have those efforts recommended for use in the future?

4. How similar were the populations and the conditions, in the settings you reviewed, to those in our setting?

5. If there were no prior efforts to note, what theory did you draw on in your design?

6. a. What is the specific design you are proposing?

b. How is each step in the design consistent with your findings, or does it go beyond your findings from the literature and your studies of other similar programs?

c. Who was consulted and involved in the design decisions? What were dissenting opinions, and how were these dealt with?

d. How were those who must implement the program involved in its design?

7. What conditions are needed to provide an adequate trial of the design you are proposing? What is the time line?

8. What skills, training, agreements, and decisions are necessary in order to begin a fair implementation of the program that you are recommending?

9. What extra persons and resources will be needed to implement the program design being suggested? Do those people need special skills? How will these individuals have the time to devote to the implementation?

10. What will the program cost in each setting recommended, and how long will it take to try, evaluate, and then replicate to all settings in which it is needed?

11. What data must be collected, (When, from whom, and by whom), to make decisions to adjust, scrap, or extend the program?

12. Who will analyze these data and report them regularly? Who will receive these reports?

13. Who is responsible for making continuation, expansion, or scrapping decisions? How will those persons be informed so that their decisions have a solid base?

14. How does the program design as suggested meet the original goals and priorities? Where the program as recommended does not meet the priorities, justify and explain the reasons.

15. What signs and data will be used to discover whether and at what rate the program is beginning to meet its intended goals?

Implementation

1. Who is in charge of the implementation?

2. How are the steps in your implementation sequenced so that the program is phased into existing settings and calendars?

3. How are the steps in your implementation sequenced so that all resources are available when needed?

4. How is the implementation sequenced so that late delivery of key materials or training or other resources can be managed and still allow for fair implementation?

5. How are the critical steps in the implementation identified and monitored so that you know when there are problems to attend to?

6. How do those involved in the implementation know when they must begin their part of the project?

7. What problems have you anticipated in the implementation? How will you know when these problems are arising?

8. Who is responsible for monitoring the progress of the implementation? What data will be collected and reported to the persons responsible for the major decisions of the implementation? Who will collect and analyze these data so that decisions makers can make informed decisions?

9. What feedback loops to the implementor are built into your plan (from the top decision makers) so that they know that the program still has the support it needs to succeed?

10. When may senior decision makers expect data from the implementation so that they may give feedback on their expectations and concerns?

Evaluation

1. How do you know that the evaluation data from the implementation phase and its results are being collected and analyzed on time?

2. What implementation forms have been developed to display the evaluation data so that decision makers can understand them and easily identify the trends they show?

3. How will the data and the results from the project be shared with the total system, the community, and other agencies so that others may benefit from the project results?

4. What groups will meet to analyze the data to advise to extend or scrap the program? When will these meetings be called? Who will call them?

If the district in this case study had had such a set of monitoring questions, significant decision-makers would have noticed that the original secondary program did not fully address the board's priority at the beginning. For example, the research on intervening with low achieving students states that support from the home and community are essential in preventing students from dropping out of school. In addition, the original mission statement from the board stated that the pilot programs that were

implemented were to have included home and community intervention. Because recommended periodic monitoring of the pilot program beginning with the planning did not exist, this critical part of the intervention was left out of the program that was finally approved for implementation.

Finally, the superintendent should expect to receive information from these questions relating to the roles and decisions made by other decision-makers who are involved in the implementation of the pilot program. As a result of the answers to these questions, other decision makers would also receive information regarding the entire program in relation to their own responsibilities. This would provide an overview of the status of the program to all decision-makers and would prevent decisions from being made in isolation based on limited information. Therefore, it is recommended that research used in planning, mission statements/objectives for pilot programs, role responsibilities, and financial accountability, management details, and instructional issues serve as a framework for designing these questions which will guide administrators' implementation of new programs.

In addition to the set of questions for monitoring the information that is needed to make decisions, about an implementation, there is a need to establish two distinct monitoring paths when a new program is being pilot tested. One path would focus on the management details of the implementation of the program. The other path would monitor the instructional component of the new program. The information regarding each of the areas would be collected by different individuals. Each of these individuals would collect accurate data, that was not influenced by the other. If such a monitoring program had existed in the case study pilot program, significant characteristics of potential student dropouts (i.e., having low

self esteem, students feeling that they have little control of their future, perceiving that adults in the building don't care about them, feeling that the discipline code of the school is unfair), could have been monitored. The individual responsible for this monitoring would have noted that the program was not fully addressing all of these characteristics of at risk students. This information would have been passed on to the facilitator and decisions about program changes could have been considered.

These monitors could be teachers, building administrators, or central office administrators. The individuals would then channel the collected information to a pilot facilitator. It is recommended that these data be shared with the pilot facilitator on a regular basis especially at the beginning of the implementation period. The independence of this monitoring increases the likelihood of real trials of new programs.

There should be a facilitator for every pilot implementation of new programs. This pilot facilitator depending upon the size and financial ability of the district could be a teacher, a building administrator, or a central office administrator. This individual should be appointed as soon as a decision is made to address a specific issue by designing and pilot testing a program. This individual should also be given a clear charge of responsibilities which would include all of the expectations and limitations established by central office administrators about the program. The charge, besides answering the program monitoring questions, would include funding limits and political issues and concerns. With these guidelines, the facilitator would be able to assist in planning the program and in monitoring the implementation process. In addition, he/she could also provide clear support to the pilot program's staff through training, regular observations

and feedback sessions, and by providing materials essential to the success of the program. This facilitator would also be the individual who would be responsible for providing first hand information regarding the program to the superintendent and other significant decision-makers.

It is also recommended that the facilitator of a pilot program have decision-making powers clearly spelled out. In addition, he/she should be consulted on decisions that may affect the implementation of the program. If he/she is consulted he/she will be able to influence decisions regarding the program and the factors that influence its implementation. As this study describes, the case study Pilot Facilitator had limited decision-making power throughout the implementation year. He should have been directly involved in the selection of the site, the selection of the teaching staff, and the master scheduling with the other decision-makers associated with the pilot program. He also had limited knowledge regarding the district's commitment to the program. In addition, because of his status in the organization, the Facilitator had little influence over decisions outside of the program that had an impact on it. Because of his other district responsibilities, he had limited time to spend at the actual pilot site. If a facilitator had been consulted early, some of the factors that had direct impact on this program could have been considered. With early appointment and clear direction provided by a charge of responsibilities, some if not all of the factors that affected the program negatively could have been adjusted and many negative effects might have been eliminated.

Planning

The literature on organizations suggests that when staff members are directly involved in the planning and implementation of new programs, they become invested in the program and strive to make it succeed. The district in this case study has made an effort to incorporate this philosophy into its process for program planning. However, when committee members who plan are removed from the actual implementation site they do not usually demonstrate the same level of commitment as those who are at the actual site of implementation.

Since the literature supports the fact that effective program implementation begins with planning and involves the individuals that will implement the plan, it follows that the school which will act as the pilot site should be directly involved in the planning of the actual pilot program. Therefore, it is recommended that once the priority is identified, the pilot site should also be identified. The staff of the pilot site and the facilitator should then begin planning the intervention program. This process would also eliminate the need for a facilitator to "sell" a faculty a preplanned program in which they have no ownership. This early involvement would also allow the planning time to become part of the orientation and training of the staff.

Implementation of new programs

School districts face two enormous and often conflicting tasks. The first of these tasks is to manage the existing program. The second task facing our schools is the problem of reform efforts as new needs arise for various at risk groups.

In this case study, the immediate concern of this district was to meet the ongoing needs of the district and the case study school. This concern must be addressed. However, maintenance of the ongoing school program was accomplished at the expense of the pilot program. The immediate needs of this district were so compelling that the pilot program could not be implemented in the site chosen with the conditions present which were critical to its original design. As a result, the pilot which was designed to meet the needs of a group of "at risk" students was not really tested and the school was disrupted at the same time. This creates an ineffective way to measure the success or failure of strategies involved in the intervention.

In this case, external factors such as a new administrative team, crowded conditions in the school, and the lack of sufficient teachers to staff the program, all led to constant modification and adaptations of the program within the school environment. If pilot programs are to be more than a band aid attempt to quickly address an issue or a problem, a commitment must be made to insure that a pilot program has an environment and support from the district to sufficiently test its intervention strategies. This case study leads to the conclusion that minimum conditions for implementation must be defined and ensured before real trials should begin.

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